

# Poverty task force addresses action plan to packed crowd

By SETH WALLACE [swallace@palltimes.com](mailto:swallace@palltimes.com) | Posted: Wednesday, December 9, 2015 4:00 am

MEXICO – An overflowing crowd packed the multi-purpose room at the Center for Information, Technology and Innovation in Mexico on Tuesday night for the unveiling of an action plan to improve health and combat poverty in Oswego County.

Convened by the Oswego County Community Health and Poverty Reduction Task Force, a collaboration of government, education and community organizations, the meeting laid out the stark realities of the county's economy, public health and social services and what can be done to fix it.

"There is no magic bullet for the challenges facing this county," said Rob Krupicka of czb Consulting, who worked with the task force to develop the action plan. "Praying for the next business not to close is not a strategy or viable solution." Speakers at the event lamented the poor statewide rankings for which Oswego is often cited — high unemployment and dependence on social services coupled with low economic growth.

Despite that prognosis, the overarching theme of the evening was Oswego County's ability to dig its way out of its problems, which have taken years to accumulate.

"This is a tremendous outpouring tonight," said county Legislator Roy Reehil, R-Constantia, who also serves as chairman of the task force. "We need to take anyone, who can do anything, and multiply it through communication, cooperation and collaboration across boundaries." The notion of the Oswego County community banding together to meet its economic and health challenges was echoed by numerous speakers at the event, including county Legislator Daniel LeClair, R-Palermo, who declared the road to recovery "starts tonight." "We need your help," LeClair told the crowd. "We have people in this room tonight who are wise, who are knowledgeable. Our county has reached a place of a terrible condition. We can build this. It's our home. We want our children and grandchildren to have a future



## Poverty task force addresses action plan to packed crowd

A packed crowd filled the Center for Instruction, Technology and Innovation in Mexico on Tuesday night. County Legislator Roy Reehil, R-Constantia, pictured above speaking, and other members of the Community Health and Poverty Reduction Task Force presented the findings of a months-long study on how to improve economic and quality of life concerns in Oswego County.

here." The action plan as described by Krupicka and Reehil is comprised of six separate teams within the task force and Tuesday's presentation served as a recruiting tool for community, business and education stakeholders to learn more about how they can contribute.

The enumerated missions and goals encompass a wide range of issues facing county departments and municipalities, focusing on a broad spectrum of issues ranging from inception and execution of a comprehensive economic development plan to an increase in educational opportunities for at-risk students.

Also touched on by Krupicka, Reehil and other speakers was a fundamental need to change the way Oswego County operates to bring its goals and measurable achievements into alignment with the reality facing the county.

"This county has reset what it considers 'normal,'" said Krupicka, who spoke of the need to create a "culture of constant improvement." "There's so much pride in this room and we can embrace the idea that what we've always done is not necessarily what we have to do tomorrow." Officials in attendance lauded the report and the outpouring of interest and support from the audience.

"This event tonight is two years in the making and a true public and private partnership," said Legislature Majority Leader Shane Broadwell, R-Oswego.

"Today is the beginning. Let's continue doing good," said county Legislature Chairman Kevin Gardner, R-New Haven.

Reehil said in his closing statements the task force would plan on convening a day of workshop and breakout sessions to brainstorm ideas in response to the action plan and encouraged everyone to take initiative and lend their talents and ability to this long-term, evolving initiative.